

Variation in *Macronyx Croceus Vieillot*

by C. M. N. WHITE

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Clancey (Ostrich, 1958) has proposed to recognise three forms of this widespread species, one of them, *tertius*, described there at p. 77, as a new form with type locality Hartley, Southern Rhodesia. Examination of the large amount of material in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) fails to reveal any regular geographical variation throughout Africa which merits the recognition of subspecies. There is some irregular variation with some populations warmer and redder above, others colder and greyer, and similar variation in the intensity of the yellow underside is apparent. Wear also affects the colour of the upperside, and quite moderate wear induces a greyer appearance. On average the coldest populations occur in the Sudan and in south east Africa. It has been claimed that the south easternmost population should be recognised as *vulturinus* Friedmann on account of its rather large size, particularly shown in tarsus and bill. But West African birds have tarsus 35–38, those of the White Nile 35–38 and those of South Africa 36–39 in birds measured by me. Bills are similarly variable—West Africa 20–22, White Nile 21–23, Kenya 20–21, Southern Rhodesia 20–22, Natal 22–24.5 mm. These measurements do show that the south eastern birds have on an average the longest bills, but although some selected smallest populations do not overlap with these south eastern birds, others overlap appreciably. Only about 30% of the birds known as *vulturinus* can be distinguished by their long bills. Nothing is gained by the formal designation by name of such ill defined variation.

I am indebted to Mrs. Hall for examining the British Museum material with me, and to Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin for informing me that he also has been unable to see any good grounds for recognising any geographical variation by name.

A new race of the Violet-eared Waxbill *Granatina granatina* (Linnaeus) from southern Portuguese East Africa

by P. A. CLANCEY

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In my recent study of geographical variation in the Violet-eared Waxbill *Granatina granatina* (Linnaeus) (*vide Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. v, 18, 1959, pp. 253–257) I recognise two races, namely, *G. g. granatina* (Linnaeus), 1766: Huila, southern Angola, and *G. g. siccata* Clancey, 1959: near Okahandja, Damaraland, South-West Africa, based on differences in colouration in both sexes. During the course of a recent collecting trip to southern Portuguese East Africa (August–September, 1960) members of the Durban Museum staff collected a sample of pale, small-sized specimens of Violet-eared Waxbills in a new area for the species, which appear to represent an undescribed form confined to the littoral of south-eastern Africa.

Granatina granatina retusa, subsp. nov.

Type: ♂, adult. Near Panda, Inhambane district, Sul do Save, southern

Portuguese East Africa (24° 02' S., 34° 45' E.). 17th September, 1960. Durban Museum Expedition. In the collection of the Durban Museum.

Diagnosis: Adult male paler throughout than either *G. g. granatina* or *G. g. siccata*. Head-top and nape about Mikado Brown (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xxix) as against a dusty Russet or Russet/Hazel (pls. xiv, xv) in *G. g. siccata*, and mantle much lighter, being Sayal Brown (pl. xxix) with greyish olive overlay. On underparts, rather less black over the chin and upper throat, and with most of the rest of the ventral surface distinctly lighter (about Tawny (pl. xv) as against Chestnut/Russet (pls. ii, xv) in *G. g. siccata*. Adult female rather paler than *G. g. siccata*, the head-top slightly more yellowish (Buckthorn Brown (pl. xv) as against Ochraceous-Tawny (same pl.). A markedly smaller, shorter tailed race than either *G. g. granatina* or *G. g. siccata*, thus: wings of 3 ♂♂ 53.5, 54.5, 54.5, 2 ♀♀ 53, 55, as against 55.5–60 (57.5) and 56–58 (56.7) in 20 ♂♂♀♀ of *G. g. granatina*, and 57–61 (58.8) and 55.5–59 (57.4) in 20 ♂♂♀♀ of *G. g. siccata*; tails in ♂♂ 62, 62, 66.5, as against 71–77 (74.7) in *G. g. granatina* and 75–82 (78.6) mm. in *G. g. siccata*.

Paratypical material: 3 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀. All adults.

Range: At present known only from the district of Inhambane, Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 54.5, culmen (exposed) 9.5, tarsus 16.5, tail 66.5 mm.

Remarks: The Violet-eared Waxbill appears to be extremely localized in Sul do Save, and during the course of two ornithological expeditions organised by the Durban Museum the species was only once located, when the paratypical series of *G. g. retusa* was obtained. Even in the Panda district the species was only found near one watering point.

Some of the specimens of *G. g. granatina* available in collections from near Lourenço Marques are referable to the nominate race, and appear to be escaped captives brought from the interior or aviary birds.

The name chosen for the new race is from the Latin *retusus*, blunted, blunt, dull, in allusion to shorter, less acuminate tail, when it is compared with the other two races of the species.

I am grateful to the Director of the Museu Dr. Alvaro de Castro, Lourenço Marques, for the loan of relevant material.

On racial variation in *Zosterops pallida* Swainson, *sens. strict.*

by P. A. CLANCEY AND J. M. WINTERBOTTOM

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In a recent contribution by one of us (P.A.C., 1960) the characters and ranges of two racial groups of populations of the White-eye *Zosterops pallida* Swainson, 1838, *sens. strict.* (*vide* Moreau, 1957), were defined in the light of information derived from a study of new material available